

NORTHGATE STAKEHOLDERS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY

**North Seattle Community College
ED 2843A in the Dr. Peter Ku Education Building
Thursday, September 23, 2004, 4:00 pm – 6:40 pm**

The Northgate Stakeholders Group (Group) held its eighth meeting at North Seattle Community College on Thursday, September 23, 2004 from 4:00 pm to 6:40 pm. The purposes of the meeting were to:

- Approve meeting summary #7;
- Review a draft status report on Group activities and a draft workplan for 2004-2005;
- Hear a second presentation on Northgate Mall development and begin deliberation;
- Receive an update on the schedule for the Lorig development on South Lot;
- Hear a report on the inclusion of NACP policies into the Seattle Comprehensive Plan;
- Meet Northgate's Artist-in-Residence; and
- Hear a report from the Draft Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Subcommittee and make a recommendation concerning the Plan.

Welcome

Welcome, Chair Ron LaFayette

Ron LaFayette convened the meeting at 4:00 PM and welcomed the Stakeholders to their eighth meeting. He then introduced Mayor Greg Nichols.

Mayor Nichols' Remarks

Mayor Nichols began by thanking the Group for its hard work and important accomplishments, including its work related to Thornton Creek, the Lorig mixed-use development, and the Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan (CTIP). He encouraged the Group to continue working through the completion of CTIP and said he looked forward to another very successful year of Stakeholder involvement.

He also shared important news about two Northgate-related projects. First, he announced that the budget he would submit to the City Council would have an additional \$1 million for the Northgate civic center (library/community center) so the work could get started next spring. He also announced that the Puget Sound Regional Council had preliminarily awarded a \$1.3 million grant to construct an extension of 3rd Ave. NE between NE 103 and NE 100th. This new stretch of 3rd Ave. NE, he said, would break up the south lot "super block," moving traffic more smoothly in the Northgate south lot area for pedestrians, buses, cars and bicycles. It would also help make possible King County's Transit-Oriented Development and the Lorig housing and retail project. With an additional \$600,000 needed to fund final design, he said he

would propose that the City contribute \$500,000 which would go a long way toward funding the project through design.

As there were no questions for the Mayor from the Group, Dr. LaFayette thanked the Mayor for making these announcements to the Stakeholders Group first, which validated the importance of the Group's work. The Group applauded the Mayor who then left.

(Later in the meeting Jackie Kirn of the Office of Policy and Management clarified that the grant was awarded to King County which had taken the lead in applying for the grant. While Seattle had coordinated efforts with the County, she said the City wanted to acknowledge and thank the County for its leadership. The Group applauded. Ms. Kirn also reported that King County had proposed to contribute \$100,000 toward CTIP, which was very significant. She noted that transit needs are central to CTIP and the City appreciated King County's contributions and support.)

Agenda and Meeting Summary Review

The Chair briefly reviewed the agenda for the meeting and asked for comments on the draft summary of the July 22 meeting. Brad Larssen requested a change in the second paragraph on page one to clarify that remarks in the sentences following his name were made by Dr. LaFayette, not by him. The summary was approved as revised.

Dr. LaFayette invited anyone who wanted to speak during the public comment period to sign up.

Public Meetings on Proposed Neighborhood Business District Strategy

Diane Sugimura, Director of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), explained that Mayor Nichols, upon taking office, had asked DPD to simplify the Land Use Code. This effort, she said, began with revisions to the neighborhood business district code because these commercial districts are the hearts of our neighborhoods. She said the City wants to help neighborhoods achieve the goals of neighborhood plans by strengthening their commercial areas. The proposed changes include a variety of measures designed to create safer, more vibrant and accessible businesses districts; they also include provisions to improve pedestrian access for shopping and enjoyment of the neighborhood as well as revisions to parking requirements. She said that staff had developed a proposal and was hosting community meetings on September 29 in the evening and September 30 in the morning to get citizen input. (Dates of the community meetings were available in a handout.) After receiving citizen input, she said, DPD staff would develop a proposal to take to the Mayor. She also expressed willingness to discuss the neighborhood business district proposals with the Stakeholders Group if the Group was interested.

Library/Community Center Updates

Ms. Sugimura then introduced Alex Harris of Seattle Public Library and Erin Devoto of Seattle Parks and Recreation. Ms. Harris said that the funding Mayor Nichols had announced would make a big difference in the library's ability to complete the project. It would mean

many fewer cuts, letting them retain most of the features they most wanted. She said they hoped to reissue the bid package around January 5.

Ms. Devoto said that the additional funding would allow the community center (the park and the gym) to remain the size originally proposed with all of the programming that had been planned.

Stakeholders Group Status Report

Alice Shorett, the meeting facilitator, explained that the Northgate Framework Resolution called for the Group to send a status report of its activities to the City by September 1. She said that the facilitation team had drafted a brief report, sent it to Stakeholders on September 20 for review and comment, and had received three responses that were reflected in the draft report handed out at this meeting. After brief discussion, no additional changes were suggested and the Group agreed by consensus to have the status report, as presented at the meeting, sent to the Mayor and City Council as an attachment to a letter from the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Future Stakeholders Group Workplan

Ms. Shorett drew attention to a handout in the Stakeholders' packets that showed the expected schedule and topics for Stakeholder Group meetings through November 2005. Subcommittee meetings would be in addition to the full Group meetings. She recalled that both the Mayor and City Council had expressed hope that the Group would continue to serve to complete its tasks. The Chair remarked that the Group had learned how to work together and was moving forward. He said he hoped all the members would continue but asked anyone who could not to let him know. Ms. Shorett indicated that there would be a formal process if a member needed to be replaced.

Community Forum

The Chair pointed out that the workplan includes a Community Forum to be held on Tuesday evening, October 26 [Correction: November 9]. The timing, he said, would allow the Stakeholders to get input from the public so that input could be considered before the Group finalized its advice on the Simon proposal.

Mark Troxel reported that the Community Forum was going to be held in the cafeteria of North Seattle Community College from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM. The first hour was expected to be an open house.

The topics for the Community Forum would include:

- Simon Property Group's proposal for Northgate mall,
- Scoping for CTIP,
- Updates on the library and community center, and
- A report on the Stakeholders Group's activities since the May Community Forum.

Dr. LaFayette requested that the staff review the Stakeholders' input after the May community forum and develop a proposal to send in advance of the October 12 Stakeholders Group meeting. Stakeholders were encouraged to send ideas to the facilitation team so they could be incorporated into the proposal.

Relationship between the Stakeholders Group's Process and Design Review

Diane Sugimura briefly described the relationship of the Stakeholders Group's process and the design review process (referring the Group to a blue sheet in their packets). She noted that the Northgate Framework Resolution had called for Stakeholder involvement in formulating advice in the early conceptual phases of developments. This schedule, she said, correlated well with the intent of early design guidance, which is to provide feedback to a project proponent in the early, conceptual phase of a project. Early design review could involve more than one meeting, she noted. Stakeholders input on proposals would inform what was taken to the Design Review Board for early design guidance. The Design Review Board holds a public hearing where the public can speak. The Stakeholders, she said, could have a spokesperson from the Group speak on its behalf or members could speak as individuals. After the public hearing, at least one more design review meeting would be held; depending on the complexity of the project, more than one meeting might be needed.

Under the State Environmental Policy Act or SEPA, environmental review is also required. This review does not mean that the proponent must prepare an environmental impact statement. The proponent fills out a checklist, and DPD makes a determination made about the level of review that is needed. Public comment is also taken at this point, providing a second opportunity for public input on proposed projects.

She noted that the public can also comment during the Master Use Permit or MUP phase of a project, which provides a third opportunity for public input.

Question: What if the proponent does not respond to the early guidance?

Response (Diane Sugimura): The Design Review Board and DPD staff will notice and make an appropriate response.

Comment: Lorig already had an early design guidance meeting which was poorly advertised and poorly attended. It sounds like something new is in place and the Stakeholders Group will now have a chance to comment.

Response (Bruce Lorig): We intend to go back for additional guidance and we will make sure we notify you.

Comment (Diane Sugimura): One of the tasks of the Northgate Artist-in-Residence will be to develop art guidelines for a project so it gets included in the early stages.

Question: Are any design review meetings currently scheduled?

Response (Jackie Kirn): No, none are scheduled today.

Comment: The purpose of these two processes is to ensure excellence in design. I see opportunities to bring these groups together so we are working cooperatively. As a project proceeds and one gets into specifics, this interaction could be very helpful. For example, Lorig has asked for a design departure for the corner of 105th. We could have a discussion about how to meet Lorig's needs and also meet the needs of the

community. I'd like for the two processes to work cooperatively to contribute to the success of the whole Northgate revitalization.

Response (Diane Sugimura): I agree. We hope some of those early concepts can come out here and inform the whole process.

Simon Property Group Proposal for the Northgate Mall

The Chair then invited Gary Weber and Joe Stallsmith of Simon Property Group and David Harrison of the facilitation team to the front of the room.

David Harrison explained that the summary of the July 22 meeting was clear on the issues and comments that Stakeholders had raised about the proposal. He said the goal of today's discussions was to have a better sense of the comments that would rise to the level of advice and expressed hope for a rich discussion. He said the facilitation team would send out in advance of the October 12 meeting at least a list of issues for the Group's advice. He expected this would lead to a draft document the Group could take to the Community Forum for public comment. The advice, he said, was expected to be completed at the November 9 Stakeholders Group meeting.

In reviewing the Northgate Framework's list of topics the City hoped the Stakeholders would address with respect to large lot development, he said that all of the issues the Stakeholders had raised on July 22 fell within those four topics (shown in a handout) including:

- Traffic impacts and the proposed parking structure
- Pedestrian pathways
- Stormwater techniques, including natural drainage
- Design of buildings

Mr. Harrison then invited Gary Weber and Joe Stallsmith to give a presentation and encouraged the Stakeholders to interrupt if they had questions.

Mr. Weber indicated that he was not going to present at this meeting, that his role is working on the leasing aspects of the project. He introduced Mr. Stallsmith, Director of Engineering for Simon Property Group in Indianapolis, Rod Johnson of Callison Architecture, and Tom Jones of KPFF, civil engineers. Mr. Stallsmith thanked the Group for including them on the agenda and said that he hoped they could answer some of the comments from July 22 as a result of work done since that time.

Rod Johnson said he would focus on the site plan and pedestrian connections. During his presentation, he referred the Group to a set of four colored architectural renderings:

- Illustrative Site Plan
- Partial West Elevation (North)
- Partial West Elevation (South)
- Parking Elevations

He said that Simon wanted to remove the medical building and theater and proposed to add

- Retail along the west side of the mall in the northwest corner
- Retail in the southeast corner and
- A parking structure south of JC Penney.

Overview: Mr. Johnson said that Simon understood the importance of pedestrian links to adjacent property to allow pedestrians to move to and through the mall. In response, the entry into the Mall on 5th Ave. was being realigned to match the library and community center. A new pedestrian link was also planned at the corner of Northgate Way at First Ave.

He said Simon was looking at reconfiguring parking on the whole west side and in the southeast corner, with landscaping.

In reviewing the site plan, he said they had begun to create a very walkable urban edge, creating plaza areas that would complement the retailers around those plazas. The goal was to create a “village” feel that was more pedestrian-friendly in scale. Three plaza areas were being considered, each with a different feel, with active and passive areas and outside seating. They planned to create a transparent edge to encourage interaction between pedestrians on the street and activity in the retail shops. At this point, no potential tenants have not been identified.

With respect to the parking garage, he said plans were preliminary but he anticipated it would accommodate roughly 600 cars with three levels above grade. The intent was to scale it so it fits with the community. It might have a bridge to retail on a second level.

Tom Jones of KPFF handed out a site plan as a reference for his remarks on the site from a civil engineering perspective. He said that all of the development was happening on the west side. The existing site, he said, is graded toward First Ave and the site steepens as one goes south. Currently there is no detention or water quality treatment. Water just flows from the site to First Ave. He said the system being designed would alleviate those issues by flattening out the site a bit and making a more uniform grade, replacing parking with roof drainage from the new structures and adding stormwater conveyance and catch basins. The stormwater conveyance system will convey water to pipes and detention vaults, allowing the water to be released more slowly; it would also include water quality measures that would be an improvement over the current system. He said they still had to assess outfall points but it seemed like there was an opportunity via a swale or a pipe to tie into the existing system at 3rd and 1st. They would also try to improve stormwater management on the southeast side by a conveyance system including detention and an outfall.

Mr. Jones said the next step was to look at natural drainage techniques. He said they had met with the City and gotten some guidance on options. He said they needed to further define the landscaped areas where there might be opportunities for natural drainage. He said they were also considering other detention techniques besides vaults.

Questions, comments and responses

Question: Is anything changing at the top of 5th Ave. NE?

Response (Joe Stallsmith): Not as a result of Simon’s work but possibly as a result of what the City is doing.

Comment: The entry to the mall by the Bon looks greener in the drawing.

Response: Our work has focused on the west side of the mall.

Question: When do you expect to do anything on the streetscape on 5th?

Response (Joe Stallsmith): The City's plan for 5th Ave. improvements includes streetscape work and a median. Our job is to match the curb return for the library and community center.

Response (Jackie Kirn): Streetscape construction will be coordinated with the library and community center construction. This is planned for after the holidays in 2006 to avoid disruption.

Question: What's your schedule? If a subcommittee wanted to be involved, do you expect to have natural drainage sorted out by November when the Stakeholders give advice?

Response (Jackie Kirn): The City intends to convene any interested stakeholders before the October 12 meeting.

Question: Where does the drainage from roofs currently go?

Response (Tom Jones): We're assessing that right now; it's broken up around the site.

Comment: I don't see any pedestrian access to the retail areas on 1st Ave. We expect to have a link to NSCC.

Response: There's a link at the northwest corner from 1st. We want people from NSCC to come in from the south.

Comment: Later this evening, we'll see the Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Plan; you'll see that concept is for livelier activity on the west side, so we will want to capture that and open up the west side.

Question: Have you looked at solving the pedestrian problem with people crossing Northgate Way at Target?

Response: No.

Question/Comment: I want you to look at 103rd. If I wanted to come up and enjoy the patio/landscaped area on the west side, how would I get there? The link shown looks like it goes to the food court.

Response (Rod Johnson): The sidewalk around JC Penney and the north/south connection inside the mall is very strong. We are coordinating with Lorig.

Comment: I'd like to reinforce previous comments about getting people walking. Are you putting sidewalks on First?

Response: We have not looked at that.

Comment: I want a nice walkway from Northgate Way to Penneys. There's no good way to get from Penneys to King County's transit-oriented development. Also, if the mall is closed after 11 pm, one can't use the center of the mall as a pedestrian link. You should put nice wide sidewalks from 5th Ave. to Lorig, to bring people onto and

through the mall to their next destinations. The more sidewalks, the better. The plan needs to factor in the transit-oriented development, the library/community center, and NSCC.

Comment: From a security perspective, I'm interested in having more outdoor walkway areas that are frequently used and, therefore, safer.

Comment (Ron Postuma): King County hopes to have bridging across 103rd to reach the transit center. It's useful to get feedback on how to get people from the transit center to the mall. Right now the only access point is across 103rd. Does a pedestrian bridge make sense, to avoid an at-grade crossing which is what is in the Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Plan?

Comment: We want to make the pedestrian experience more enjoyable and desirable; we want active storefronts that are attractive. Both of your corner development proposals show parking all around the buildings rather than having the buildings next to the sidewalks. Stores next to the street would be more pedestrian friendly.

Comment: Rather than shoving buildings to the edge where a pedestrian can feel like he's in a tunnel with no way to avoid street noise, I prefer to walk by shrubbery than by a building.

Question: I walk down the hill on 5th Ave. NE a lot and occasionally use the steep stair in the [southeast] corner. I'd like to see access improved up that steep bank.

Question: Do these illustrations reflect requirements in the building code? I'm looking for corridors where pedestrians can walk safely and attractively to the mall.

Response (Joe Stallsmith): This is our preliminary design. We are just now getting into code issues.

Question/Comment: With respect to the parking structure, where does the bridge exit the parking structure? I'd like the eastern edge of the parking structure to be enlivened as much as possible. Planners tell us sky bridges kill street-level pedestrian traffic.

Comment (Gary Weber): We are talking to a prospective tenant for the northwest corner of the site but the parking lot is eight feet higher than the street. So far, there is no prospective tenant for the southeast corner.

Comment: It's important to have a driveway *and* a sidewalk into the mall from 1st.

Comment: I see improvement but I encourage everyone to walk around and through the mall. If this is an urban center, then this is a big piece of our neighborhood. You should also pretend you are handicapped and look at the site from the perspective of their needs.

Question: How will the new retail be designed? Will the existing mall have new entries? I'm concerned about security issues

Response: We expect these buildings will be separated.

Comment: I want to say that this is pretty attractive and an improvement over what we have.
(applause by the Group)

Comment: As we look to the Design Review process, please clarify how the concerns expressed will work in relation to the Design Review process.

Response (Diane Sugimura): We understand that Simon will apply for Design Review early guidance soon and we'll let you know when that will occur.

Comment: We're not a part of the Design Review process. I don't know who could speak for all of us. I'm concerned people are going to expect more involvement than is going to occur.

Response (Jackie Kirn): This Group could present an advisory memo. You could also comment as individuals. If you submit an advisory memo, you could still stay involved. (David Harrison) We'll try to make the opportunities intersect.

Mr. Harrison summarized the concerns expressed as focusing on pedestrian access from multiple locations and the issue of natural drainage options, which the Group has previously been interested in. Jackie Kirn said that she would email the Stakeholders when advisory discussions were to be held and people could choose to attend or not. She said they would schedule around the availability of the Stakeholders who expressed interest in participating, including Gary Weber, Mike Vincent, John Lombard, and a representative of Thornton Creek Legal Defense Fund.

Update on the Lorig Development

Bruce Lorig indicated that they had come to a few conclusions. The proposed development would be primarily residential. It would include about 600 units, of which 60% would be at market rate and 40% would be earmarked for elderly and affordable housing. Retail space would cover 40,000-50,000 square feet and 400-500 parking spaces would be provided. He said they had been working with Seattle Public Utilities on the water course design because their work must be integrated but that the work was currently on hold because Lorig could not keep up. He identified three problems they faced:

- Underground parking is very expensive to build. He believes the parking requirements are excessive and is encouraging DPD to relax those requirements. He said he hoped the Stakeholders would support that. They have also been working with Metro to coordinate parking which would benefit both of them.
- A height restriction on the east side of the block could cause them to lose one floor from a mixed-use building. He hoped to get the Group's support for changing the height limit.
- They don't really know the size of right-of-way for 103rd Ave. because they don't know the actual size of the land, which prevents precise planning.

He said they had gotten a two-month extension from Simon and might need more than that. Once they know if the City Council will relax the parking requirement, he said, they can move ahead. He said he would return when they had a better schedule.

Inclusion of the Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan (NACP) into the City's Comprehensive Plan

Norm Schwab of the City Council Central Staff reported to the Group on how its input on including NACP into the City's Comprehensive Plan had been used (including possible rezones of property designated as single-family). Referring the Group to a handout, he indicated that the majority of the Group's recommendations were expected to be incorporated. The exception was the issue of rezones. He said that the City Council felt that Option 1 which the majority of the Group had favored was a very strict policy and did not allow flexibility. On that basis, the City Council had moved forward with Option 3 which allowed the Council "to weigh and balance the other factors set out in the Land Use Code in making a determination of whether a site met single-family locational criteria" (from the handout).

A stakeholder expressed significant disappointment. She said that when this process was set up, the Stakeholders were told they could expect to receive the rationale when the City did not use the Group's recommendations. She requested the City Council to put that rationale in writing and sign the document. Mr. Schwab said he would pass the request to the City Council.

Introduction of the Artist-in Residence, Benson Shaw

Mr. Shaw explained the process by which he had been selected and his scope of work, which was to create an arts plan for the Northgate area over the coming three months. He said he would propose a pilot project to show what a plan could be. He gave a PowerPoint presentation to show examples of his work in a wide variety of settings, including a number of neighborhood projects. He invited members to talk to him during the break or after the meeting.

Lorna Mrachek announced that she had been on the selection panel for the Artist-in Resident and was delighted that Mr. Shaw had been chosen. She said that Phyllis Shulman, Molly Burke and she were initiating members of a Northgate Arts Council (foreseen in the Northgate Framework Resolution) and they hoped to get that organization launched later in the fall. She also indicated that each of the five community councils in Northgate could apply for small grants and they could coordinate the art for all five communities.

A member complimented this approach and asked how those with ideas for locations where art should be considered could get ideas to Mr. Shaw. She thought that businesses would like to be involved and could pay for materials.

Break

Open Space and Pedestrian Connections Plan

Lyle Bicknell, urban designer with DPD, reported that they had reached a happy milestone: thanks to the work of the community and the Stakeholders, including a subcommittee, he said they had crafted a final product (included in the member's packets). It collects and codifies the issues and priorities. He said implementation was really key; page 32 of the plan identifies ways to implement the proposals, including elements that would go directly into the

CTIP planning process. He invited the members to view and provide input on evocative concepts depicted in the foyer as “vignettes.”

Reporting for the Open Space/Pedestrian Connections Subcommittee, Marilyn Firlotte said that the group had met several times, gotten input from five or six members, reviewed the language and ideas, and as a group support the Plan. It’s a general plan, she said, with ideas for moving people in and around in ways other than by car (over and under the freeway, coming from the neighborhoods to the mall, and adding sidewalks). This plan would lay the groundwork for more specific projects. The Subcommittee felt it was a good beginning that summarizes people’s concerns and makes the idea of pedestrian-friendly areas a major component of Northgate’s revitalization. Bruce Keiser added that DPD had put together a lot of great graphics that showed how to integrate the whole neighborhood. It also included “idea sparkers” that were not real designs but out of which came ideas for expanding the pedestrian integration beyond the core area. With respect to the west side of I-5, it looks at improving circulation on the west side, strengthens 92nd and Northgate Way and strengthens breaking up the super block that I-5 creates on the west side. He felt it helped to define the CTIP area and integrated traffic and pedestrian needs.

It was moved and seconded that the Group support the Plan; the Group voted unanimously to do so and applauded this result. The Chair thanked the Subcommittee and Mr. Bicknell for their work.

Public Comment

Rosemarie Fantham and Marlo Mytty, residents on NE 90th, spoke about the growing traffic congestion on their street and the attendant noise they were experience as their non-arterial street was used as an arterial. Congestion came from school buses, trucks, trash collection trucks (which come twice a week because collection days differ for the north and for the south sides of the street), and cars that use the street to go between Northgate Way and Lake City Way. They said they had begun to count vehicles numbers and types. They requested that the problems on NE 90th be considered in CTIP and transportation planning.

Response (Tony Mazzella of Seattle Department of Transportation): This is the kind of information that is very helpful to have as we establish existing conditions. He said SDOT planned to do traffic counts and identify vehicle types so this information could be fed into the planning process.

Comment: The original plan was not to go as far south as 90th; this shows why it should. CTIP must include an area much larger than the mall. It should also consider Lake City Way.

Adjournment

As there were no other comments, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.

Meeting Attendance

Representatives and Alternates of the **Northgate Stakeholders Group** in attendance were:

King County/Metro: Rep. Ron Postuma
Simon Property Group: Rep. Gary Weber, Alt. Sam Stalin
Maple Leaf Community Council: Rep. Janice Camp
Licton Springs Community Council: Rep. Jerry Owens
Haller Lake Community Council: Rep. Velva Maye, Alt. Sue Geving
Pinehurst Community Council: Rep. Lorna Mrachek
Victory Heights Community Council: Rep. Brad Cummings
Thornton Creek Alliance: Rep. John Lombard
Northgate Chamber of Commerce: Shaiza Damji
North Seattle Community College: Rep. Ronald LaFayette, Alt. Bruce Kieser
Northwest Hospital: Rep. Chris Roth
Senior Housing: Rep. Jeanne Hayden
Renters/Condo Owners: Rep. Debra Fulton, Alt. Brad Mason
Multi-family Housing Developers: Rep. Colleen Mills, Alt. Rodney Russell
Businesses Outside the Mall: Rep. Michelle Rupp
Labor: Rep. Brad Larssen
At-large: Alt. Barbara Maxwell
At-large: Rep. Marilyn Firlotte, Alt. Mike Vincent

Members of the Triangle Associates facilitation team included Alice Shorett, David Harrison and Vicki King.